

Removing trees from transmission rights of way is about delivering safe, reliable power.



A core mission of TVA is to provide the electric power we depend on for our homes, businesses, healthcare facilities, schools and more. To deliver that affordable, reliable power to our customers, TVA must diligently protect the lines through which it flows. We have been managing rights of way across the Tennessee Valley for 79 years. We do so with care and concern for the environment, property owners, and the public we serve.

First and foremost, we want to do that safely. Failure to clear our easements is a danger to public safety and we are committed to preventing this public hazard. Trees and other objects do not have to touch a high-voltage line that is not insulated to cause injury, fire or property damage. Transmission lines are designed to flex up and down and side to side as the power on the line, temperature and winds change. As these lines move, they must maintain a safe distance from all surrounding vegetation or risk a “flashover,” or short to ground. Flashovers can occur on high voltage lines from as far away as 10 feet. Such flashovers certainly create reliability challenges but can also create safety hazards as well. In fact, any tree that could fall near the line is a potential danger.

Public safety is of utmost importance and so is reliable power. It brings businesses and jobs to our area, and allows schools, hospitals, our communities and homes to operate. Industries that provide jobs for our communities understand fully the value of reliable power. Unreliable power delivery can significantly impact industries and the people who work there. Earlier this year near Knoxville, vegetation caused a momentary outage on a power line serving an industrial area. Even though the power line was not interrupted, the tree caused a momentary voltage drop. That small voltage drop was enough to affect the processes of three industrial customers, costing them an estimated \$200,000.

TVA also abides by all applicable environmental laws and regulations. Before we do any work, an environmental review is completed. Our environmental best management practices are very stringent on protecting the environment. Guidelines concerning streams, birds and wildlife are detailed and specific. We also work with heritage groups to identify cultural and historical areas. If environmental issues or species of concern are identified in the work area, appropriate measures are taken to ensure there is no significant environmental impact as we work to keep the lights on. Many plant and animal species thrive in the low-growing trees and grasses in our rights of way, and have for years.

We also work very hard to respect property owners. Even though we purchase the right to clear our rights of way, we work diligently with property owners along our transmission corridors. We offer a number of options when we remove trees from the rights of way. We work hard to return areas to the condition we find them, and we train all our employees to respect the property of others. For the most part we are very successful in this area. In 2011, we touched over 46,000 individual property owners with only 11 formal complaints. The vast majority of people across the valley understand the importance and value of maintaining the integrity of the clearing rights we purchased.

TVA has been clearing trees from rights of ways for more than 79 years. Clearing dangerous trees from rights of way is not a new policy. Through the years, we have fine-tuned our policies and practices to make sure we are aligned with environmental requirements, regulatory requirements, and to meet the expectations of the majority of the public. Over the past few years we have been working hard to be more consistent and thorough as we apply our tree-cutting policies. This is not popular with everyone. It would be easier to allow exceptions and treat people differently. We choose not to take the easy way. We choose to consistently treat people with fairness and respect. We choose to ensure the safety of the people that live in the Valley. We choose to do the best job in order to keep your lights on, all the time.

We appreciate your understanding and support as we work to deliver safe, reliable power.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Manning", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Rob Manning
Executive Vice President and Chief Energy Delivery Officer
TVA Energy Delivery